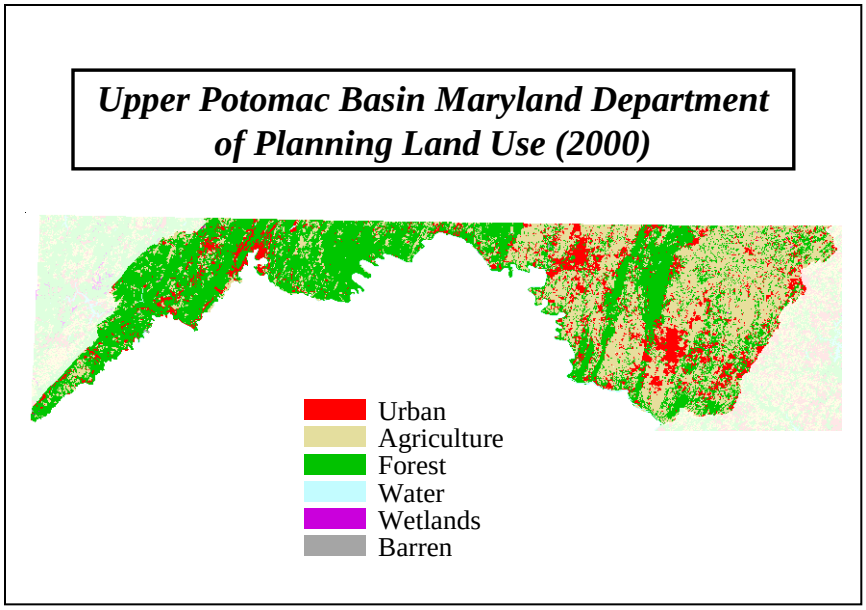
# Upper Potomac Basin Summary

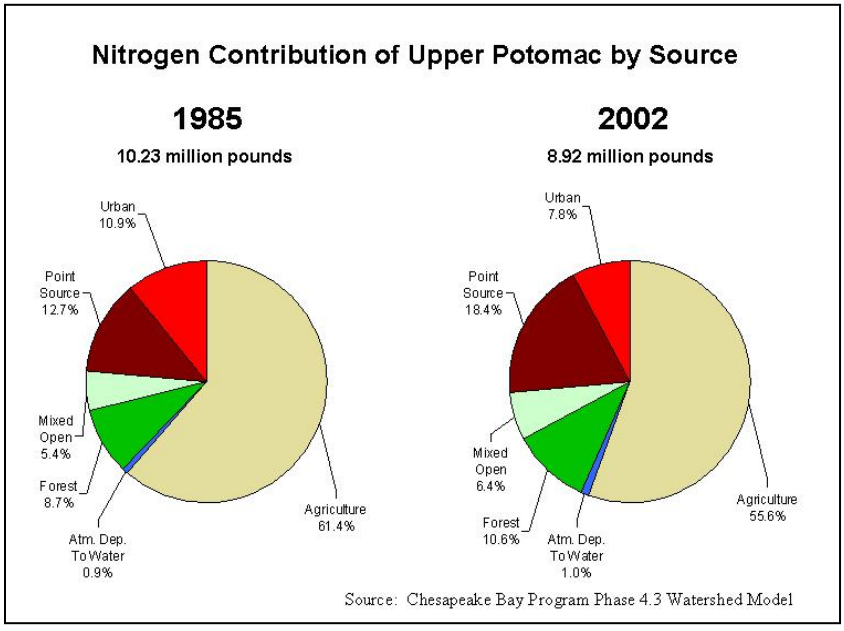
**Executive Summary**
**1985-2003 data, February 2005**

The Upper Potomac Basin is largely forested (48 percent) or agricultural (38 percent) land. Agricultural lands contribute most of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediments. Nutrient loadings have decreased somewhat, but sediment loadings have increased. Ambient nitrogen levels have decreased throughout the basin, but phosphorus levels have declined mainly in the eastern portion of the basin. Nutrient levels are relatively good in the west, but poor in the east. Sediment levels are high (poor) throughout much of the basin.




**LOADINGS** (based on watershed model)

***Modeled nitrogen and phosphorus loadings have decreased slightly. Sediment loadings have increased. Agricultural lands are the dominant source.***




- Total nitrogen loadings have decreased about 13 percent from 1985 to 2002 (down from 10.2 to 8.9 million pounds). Agricultural lands are the dominant source (56 percent), but point sources are playing a bigger role than in the past (now 18 percent).
- Total phosphorus loadings have decreased 31 percent from 1985 to 2002 (down from 1 to 0.7 million pounds). Agricultural

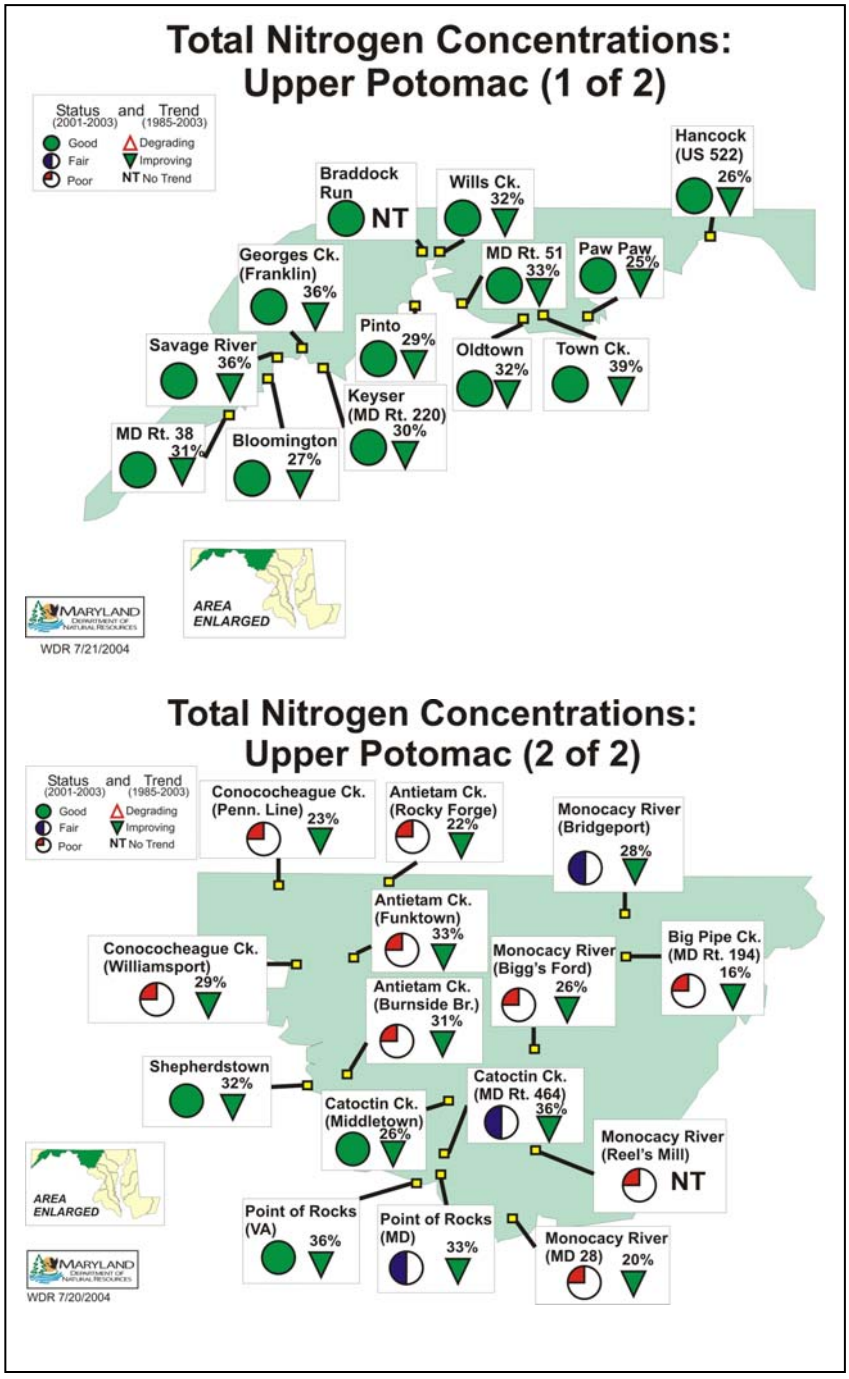
lands are the dominant source (59 percent), and point sources are playing a smaller role than in 1985 (now 22 percent).

- Sediment loadings have increased slightly from 1985 to 2002 (up from 323,000 tons to 330,000 tons).

**LONG-TERM TIDAL WATER QUALITY** (based on monitoring concentration data)

***Nitrogen levels have decreased throughout the basin, but phosphorus levels have declined mainly in the eastern portion of the basin. Nutrient levels are relatively good in the west, but poor in the east. Sediment levels generally have not improved and remain poor in many areas.***

- Total nitrogen has declined at every station except Reel's Mill on the Monocacy River.
- Phosphorus levels have declined at about half of the eastern stations and at the Pinto station in the west.
- Nutrient levels tend to be low (relatively good) in the west, but generally poor in the east.
- Sediment levels are high (poor) throughout much of the basin. No improvements in sediments are seen, with the exception of two stations (Maryland Route 38 and Bloomington).




For more detailed information see the complete basin summary at: http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat/basin_summaries.html.